

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 JUSE-00 /056 W

-----020930Z 091256 /17

P R 020850Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3606

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SEOUL 3591

EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SOPN PFOR KS US

SUBJ: KOREAN PRESS REACTION TO ATTEMPT TO INDUCE AMBASSADOR
HAM TO DEFECT

REF: SEOUL 3553 290924Z APR 77)

1. OVER WEEK-END, KOREAN VERNACULAR PRESS RESPONDED EDITORIALY IN STRONG TERMS TO PARIL 28 REVELATION THAT U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE PROSECUTOR PAUL MICHAEL HAD URGED FORMER AMBASSADOR TO U.S. HAM PYONG-CHUN, TO DEFECT (REFTEL). CHUNGANG ILBO APRIL 30 SUMMARIZED FONMIN PAK TONG-JUN'S ANSWER AS FOLLOWS: ROKG (A) "WILL CLARIFY WHETHER THE RECOMMENDATION WAS A PERSONAL HOAX BY MICHEL OR A DELIBERATE ACTION BY THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT AND (B) "WILL PRESS (THE U.S.) ON HOW IT WILL DEAL WITH THIS ISSUE."

2. EDITORIALS ON APRIL 30 AND MAY 1 TERMED THE STORY "SHOCKING", "ASTONISHING," AND "UNBELIEVABLE." MILDEST CONCLUSION WAS DRAWN BY CHOSON ILBO WRITERS WHO, NOTING USG REPLY TO KOREAN PROTESTS IS NOT KNOWN, CONCLUDED
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THAT "CASE IS DISPLEASING... AND DOWNGRADES PRESTIGE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT."

3. AT LEAST TWO OTHER PAPERS CARRIED THEIR COMMENTS FARTHER. KYONGYANG SINMUN, FIRST CALLING FOR A) REVELATION OF FULL STORY, B) DUE APOLOGY, AND C) PROPER EXPLANATION THROUGH DIPLOMATIC CHANNEL, WENT ON TO "DEPLORE"

FORMATION OF "FRASER COMMITTEE BY U.S. CONGRESSMEN
CRITICAL OF KOREA" TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA,
AND CONCLUDED WITH HOPE THAT AMERICANS WILL "CORRECTLY
UNDERSTAND REAL SITUATION IN KOREAN PENINSULA" AND
"SOLIDIFY TRADITIONAL FRIENDSHIP" BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

4. STRONGEST EDITORIAL APPEARED IN HANGUK ILBO (AND
ENGLISH-LANGUAGE KOREAN TIMES). WRITERS SAID THAT REPORT
WAS ENOUGH TO "ENRAGE THE KOREAN PEOPLE AS A WHOLE" AND
EXPRESSED "DISGUST" AT MICHEL'S "LOW ESTIMATE" OF
KOREA. REFERRING TO RECENT PROBLEMS BETWEEN KOREA AND U.S.
(REPORTED BUGGING OF BLUE HOUSE AND UNILATERAL U.S.
CRITICISM OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN KOREA), WRITERS NOTE THEIR
HOPE THAT THESE PROBLEMS WILL BE SETTLED "SMOOTHLY AND
LOGICALLY" IN LINE WITH CARTER'S "MORAL DIPLOMACY,"
BUT CONCLUDE BY CITING THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH A MORALITY
WHICH PERMITS "GROWING LENIENCY" TOWARD P'YONGYANG REGIME,
SUCH AS OUR RECENT RELAXATION OF TRAVEL BAN TONORTH
KOREAN AND OUR "DANGEROUS POLICY" OF TROOP WITHDRAWAL.

5. COMMENT: SEVERAL PRIVATE COMMENTS TO US HAVE TENDED
TO KEEP THIS MATTER IN PERSPECTIVE, WITHKOREANS NOTING
THAT THIS WAS UNAUTHORIZED ACT OF ONE USG OFFICIAL.
EDITORIAL REACTION IS PARTICULARLY STRONG, HOWEVER, AND
WILL SERVE TO FURTHER EMBITTER ATTITUDES HERE.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AMBASSADORS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, DEFECTION, ALLEGATIONS
Control Number: n/a
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Sent Date: 02-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977SEOUL03591
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770152-1237
Format: TEL
From: SEOUL
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t197705103/aaaadlpr.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
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Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 SEOUL 3553
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02-Mar-2005 12:00:00 am
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2330167
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KOREAN PRESS REACTION TO ATTEMPT TO INDUCE AMBASSADOR HAM TO DEFECT
TAGS: PINT, SOPN, PFOR, KS, US, (HAM PYONG-CHUN)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0837e287-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009